DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 448 699 IR 020 462

AUTHOR	Brinsmead, Anne-Marie; Lang, Gregory M.; McTavish, Lee
TITLE	Create Online Learning for Where It's Going To Be, Not Where It's Been: An Online Pedagogy for 2006.
PUB DATE	1999-10-00
NOTE	7p.; In: WebNet 99 World Conference on the WWW and Internet Proceedings (Honolulu, Hawaii, October 24-30, 1999); see IR 020 454.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Computer Uses in Education; Continuing Education; *Distance Education; Educational Administration; Educational Technology; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; *World Wide Web
IDENTIFIERS	*Learning Environments; University of Toronto (Canada); *Web Based Instruction

ABSTRACT

This paper presents an online pedagogy for 2006 and highlights the learning environment of the School of Continuing Studies at the University of Toronto's Web Forum (i.e., an online education management system that combines teaching and learning systems with management and administration systems). The following components of the Web Forum are described: learning experiences; off-line course enhancement environments; dynamic educational links database; course environment; new course/instructor environment; new or potential learner environment; and instructor/facilitator environment. The context in which a course of learning offering may be integrated into the Web Forum is summarized, including assumptions about learner care, the multiple touch points of telephony, and personalization. The learner's perspective on where online learning has been and its shortcomings is presented, together with ways that adult educators may shift and move toward a menu of pedagogical ideals as facilitated by the solutions provided by Web Forum. It is concluded that Web Forum delivers optimal learning environments and value to the customer. It may be deployed without major investment and prepares the institution to benefit from the projected $17 billion online distributed learning market in 2006 while delivering learner-centric education opportunities. (MES)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 448 699

Create Online Learning for Where It's Going to Be, Not Where It's Been: An Online Pedagogy for 2006

Anne-Marie Brinsmead, French, Foreign Languages & Translation Studies, University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies, Canada, e-mail: abrinsmead@scs.utoronto.ca

Gregory M. Lang, Media & New Technology Studies, University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies, Canada, e-mail: glang@scs.utoronto.ca

Lee McTavish, Certification Studies & Later Life Learning, University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies, Canada, e-mail: lmctavish@scs.utoronto.ca

Content Abstract: The online distributed learning market is projected to be worth $17 billion by 2006. If projections are realized and your organisation is prepared, a .01% share of this market would be worth $1.7 million to you. Develop an online strategy that optimizes your ROI (Return on Investment) by evolving current business practices and needs into an online environment through the extension of your best pedagogical practices. Implement a distributed learning tactic, based on an evolutionary business model, which delivers immediate value to your organisation and its clients, while preparing you to share in the projected distributed learning market. Build an integrated online environment that derives its value by mitigating current business expenses, reducing the business risk of new product development and deployment and generating new revenue from the sale of micro-learning experiences. Explore with us the development of this leading edge, user-friendly, learner-centered environment and the power of its application.

The School of Continuing Studies at the University of Toronto has been in operation for over one hundred years, and has been providing distance learning opportunities for over fifty years. With the continuing evolution of technology and the changing demands of our customers, we recognized the need to 'think digital.' After a two year applied research project on on-line educational delivery, entitled The Carrier Pigeon Project, we concluded that we should enter this new market cautiously by continuing to evolve the services and products we traditionally provide. The Carrier Pigeon project highlighted many of the challenges that must be confronted in order to succeed online and was the genesis of our current online strategy. Our learning from Carrier Pigeon is best summarized by the second last paragraph of the Executive Summary of the report:

> "However inspiring and seductive computer mediated interaction is, there continues to be the danger of limiting our concerns to the physical design; to be overly interested in the delivery mechanisms and interfaces while neglecting the content material to be learned. We understand on academic, business, and technical grounds, that for optimal learning to occur, it is the complex integration, not the simple balance, of interface and substance that will engage the learner at various cognitive and physical levels of interaction. And it will be the learners' ability to apply their learning that will engage their customers and corporations." Dr. Mary Cone Barrie - Director, School of Continuing Studies 1997.

The School of Continuing Studies has a strong tradition of responding to customer needs but intrinsic to those needs is our dedication to pedagogy. Within the context of both of these commitments we decided that we should continue to personalize and customize our products and services to meet the evolving needs of our customer community both off and online. The high capital investment required for online courses provided the framework for how we determined our next steps. After extensive strategic thinking and consideration we developed our online strategy and the tactical means: consolidate into an integrated whole the School of Continuing Studies' existing and future technology-delivered offerings, selected enhancements, customer service business processes, and the information technology components. In this paper, we present an online pedagogy for 2006, and highlight the optimal learning environment of the Web Forum by applying it to one course offering entitled Leadership Online.

IR020462

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

G.H. Marks

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☛ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Web Forum: An Online Business Strategy for 2006

The Online Strategy

To provide a personalized and customized learning experience to our community of learners.

The Web Forum:

The Web Forum is an online education management system that combines teaching and learning systems with management and administration systems. The Forum is comprised of a variety of integrated environments for the delivery of products and services that may be accessed in flexible combination, and includes:

Learning Experiences

Web Forum is an online environment in which appropriate course components are stored for sale-on-demand. A customer may access and complete the component parts of a course or training offering to meet their personal and immediate information and training needs. The School manages the customer's learning history to identify if and when s/he has successfully completed a significant portion of an existing course or a newly identified path of study. Once a match is made between the customer and the customer's specific requirements, the customer may register and take only specific information offerings or training modules, choosing whichever ones that will result in a customized experience.

Off-line Course Enhancement Environments

The Web Forum online environment is a repository which stores course enhancements and may include URLographies, reading lists, course outlines, weekly course updates, chat rooms, news groups, threaded discussions, educator/facilitator/mentor access, etc.

Dynamic Educational Links Database

The Web Forum is an online educational resource storage environment where links are indexed --by the School's program directors, by the instructors/educators/facilitators, and by the learners-- for quality and relevance. Course or learning module-developers may select appropriate links through keywords and references. Auto-check of link validity is a feature of this database. Access to this environment is available to learners or subscribers.

Course Environment

Web Forum is an online environment that hosts courses and learning offerings. It is also an environment where learners manage and/or complete their learning.

New Course / Instructor Environment

Web Forum is an online environment in which instructors may propose new courses and learning modules. Course or module proposals may be posted for marketability and need not be developed until interest is high.

New or Potential Learner Environment

Web Forum is an online environment in which potential learners may browse and sample courses and learning modules. They may peruse existing and potential course and module offerings, and identify what they would like to

learn, including the medium of delivery, the language of delivery, the timing, etc. This environment dynamically manages waiting lists by identifying growing interest in courses and learning modules through automatic notification to all stakeholders.

Instructor/Facilitator Development Environment

Web Forum is an online environment in which instructors/educators network with peers, and exchange tips and hints for managing adult learners' needs and learning style preferences. This environment is also the medium of delivery for instructor/educator/facilitator professional development.

A Summary of the Context in which a Course or Learning Offering May Be Integrated into the Web Forum

The critical success factors in the delivery of learning, in 2006 and beyond, will be the provision of personalized and customized learning experiences through the management of educational systems and the re-framing of the adult educator mindset. Learning organizations will be in the business of offering well-defined and parameter-driven personalized customer services to learners and will be managing the expectations of learners and the relations of learners and their adult educators.

Technology will provide us the opportunity to move us closer to achieving a pedagogical ideal. Online learning of the future will create a set of new assumptions about online learning delivery:

- ***Learner care.*** Technology provides us with the opportunity to finally meet an individual's education needs. Learning organizations that provide, with guidelines, personalized adult educator response, feedback and customer service will have higher online program completion rates, higher learner satisfaction ratings, and higher learner retention. Learning organizations will have a repository of learner data and learner-educator interactions so that fine-tuning of online education delivery is possible.
- ***Multiple touch points.*** Learning institutions will assure consistency and quality of educator-learner communications across the multiple touch points of telephony, i.e., e-mail, asynchronous and synchronous web-driven interactions as well as traditional communication channels.
- ***Personalize, personalize, personalize.*** Learning institutions and adult educators will devise flexible communication systems to manage learner expectations and achieve cost efficiencies while leveraging educator-learner contact, within parameters, to optimize the online learning experience.

Learners will come to expect and enjoy optimized learning experiences due to learner-educator interactions that will occur, with parameters and ground rules, across multiple touch points. Adult learning principles will be mined to serve professional education and continuing education learners and customers and will be applied in the form of personalized learning solutions and services offered in a communication system, the ground rules of which may vary from institution to institution, from adult educator to adult educator, and from offering to offering.

Adult learners will be treated as customers. The flexibility, customization and work with the adult learner "in the way that s/he prefers" will drive effective online pedagogy by 2006. The adult educator's attitude is key. Tremendous flexibility within the learning experience will be the international standard. With the customer service attitude of the adult educator as paramount, learning environments will evolve iteratively.

Learner-centered offerings will require adult educators to shift their priorities and their roles. The primary requirement to achieving effective online education will be that adult educators make this shift. Of equal importance, the roles and expectations of all stakeholders in the management and administration of this environment will require re-definition and alignment.

Towards a Pedagogical Ideal in 2006 – from the Online Learners' Perspective

We will present, from the on-line learner's perspective, where online learning has been, its shortcomings, and how we as adult educators may shift and move more fully toward a menu of pedagogical ideals, as facilitated by the solutions which Web Forum provides.

Shortcomings:

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- There is a lack of personalized feedback from the adult educator to learners' queries, their assignments, their tests and exams. Outcomes: Even higher drop out rates for online courses in comparison with paper-based distance delivery. What is desired: personalized communication in order to progress in the learning process and maintain motivation to complete the program.
- There is a lack of multiple touch points (communication channels). No e-mail, fax or phone communication permitted between adult educator and learner. Where contact is permitted, technical complexity and difficulties have made the learning experience unfriendly.
- In first generation online courses, learners complain that they are simply lecture notes or a "text only" presentations thrown up on a website.
- There is a dearth of adult educators who have a passion and a desire to "deliver it right" online, or in other words, a desire for learner-centric delivery. (Both institutions and learners agree on this issue.)

Web Forum Solutions:

- With your adult educator and facilitator as personal guides, you will discover the subject matter in greater depth under the guidance of an expert adult educator and facilitator who will help you stay focussed.
- E-mail communications with your instructional team are strictly confidential, which means you can be comfortable raising sensitive issues in a confidential, secure environment. There will be an adult educator and a facilitator from within the institution as part of the learner support network that includes: technician, expert adult educator, facilitator, and peer communication support.

Shortcomings:

- Learning technology support requires reasonable parameters and funding to support the "help desk" infrastructure. The layering of help desk support is a key to the answer.

Web Forum Solutions:

- "Just-In-Time" help from your expert adult educator and facilitator responds to your particular needs and schedule, within reasonable timeframes. Contact your expert adult educator and facilitator by e-mail, phone or fax with questions about the content, or how to apply it as you learn, and you will receive answers and feedback in a timely fashion, usually within three to six working days. By having a learner support network, this will let you, the learner, understand and distinguish between the variety of your needs and will allow you to be discriminating in the selection of your support requests based on the communication network we offer. (Please see the Leadership Online example at end of this section.)

Shortcomings:

- Complaint: Educators are not paid for their web delivery time ("I'm checking for learners' e-mails at 2 am on Sunday mornings", etc.).

Web Forum Solutions:

- The learner will have better access to personalized feedback from adult educators, with reasonable parameters. Online communication does not mean instantaneous response. "It's not No, it's just NOT NOW." These include learners becoming familiar with the follow-up and response times arranged by the adult educators and the institution's support network. Learners' expectations will be managed and met by the communication network set in place by the institution.

Shortcomings:

- The following are types of required assignments and learning activities that have been known to fail with adult learners: required team chats, team projects & team assignments via email with attachments. In addition, first generation online courses are often packed with too many assignments (avg.12+ hrs/wk/course) in comparison to the equivalent in-class program. Matching and branching processes are needed with respect to the type of program (i.e., hard skill or soft skill training) and the degree to which content will drive the degree of flexibility and choice of activity.

Web Forum Solutions:

- Complex, excessive "busy" work is out. Learning activities are doable and reasonable within the given timelines. You will be able to balance learning projects against the constraints of time, space, economic resources, and personal and professional relationships. Your online experience for assignment completion will be feasible with a moderate to high comfort level.
- Easy Access, Anywhere, Anytime: You mine the discovery hub and information repository of the Web Forum (as well as the Web) for your needs.
- Each educational skill area will be delivered through its own password-protected website containing carefully selected digitized learning materials, including access to a collection of vetted online resources.
- You'll want to visit the identified online resources after your program has concluded, for continued learning.
- In Web Forum, the variety of online tools will include reading material and the website's "discovery hub" of high quality, hot-linked URLs.
- The course website area within Web Forum will be the communication conduit for e-mail to your coach and peer networking. If you can connect with a web page, you can connect with the course.

Shortcomings:

- Intellectual property issues have not been sorted out. Several instances: For a brand new online course which adds to the department's existing curriculum portfolio, the educator develops content, and is paid outright because the department purchases the intellectual rights to it. ("The professor takes the money and run.") In these instances, the institution holds the copyright and does not expect to see its investment paid back within the next decade.

Web Forum Solutions:

- The Leadership Online course example within the Web Forum model is based on rights to intellectual property, not outright ownership of the course content. Access to these rights is due to a cooperation, not a competition model. Adult and professional education are differentiated markets from that of the University proper. The cooperation model was made possible by selecting an existing program designed for the corporate marketplace. With a view to cooperating in the expansion of market outreach to the general adult population, the intellectual property owner was attracted to the University's ability to serve differentiated markets and thus was willing to sell rights to the program for online, paper-based distance and classroom use.

Shortcomings:

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- Adult learners online identify an immediate need or work-related problem that is relevant within the context of the course, but solutions are time consuming or go beyond the immediate need and strictly defined course objectives. Learners have a variety of learning styles and needs and often find it nearly impossible to schedule an in-class distance learning, or online course.

Web Forum Solutions:

- The learning experiences environment provides Just-in-Time learning based solutions, which, when combined with other learning experiences, form a module or course and deliver pedagogical outcomes.
- This new and potential learner environment provides a dynamic waiting list segment allowing them to identify what, when, where, and how they prefer to learn.

Shortcomings:

Personal computers are subject to crashing and Internet connections cost most users money.

Web Forum Solutions:

The strategic design of courses and learning experiences minimizes the time learners spend on-line by providing download options to work offline.

Shortcomings:

Learners have specific interests and needs arising from a course of study and would often enjoy access to and guidance from other resources on a specific topic.

Web Forum Solutions:

The dynamic educational links database environment provides learners with the opportunity to self-direct their study path moving beyond the boundaries of the traditional syllabus, and provides them with the opportunity to share their intelligence and experiences with others.

Conclusion

The Web Forum delivers optimal learning environments and value to the customer. It may be deployed without major investment and prepares the institution to benefit from the projected $17 billion market in 2006 while delivering learner-centric education opportunities.

References

Barrie, M. C., & Howarth, L., (1997). *Carrier Pigeon Project*, 1997, University of Toronto, School of Continuing Studies & Faculty of Information Studies, Toronto, ONT.

Leadership Study of Canadian Business, 1996, University of Toronto, School of Continuing Studies and Performance Challenges Corporation, Toronto, ONT.